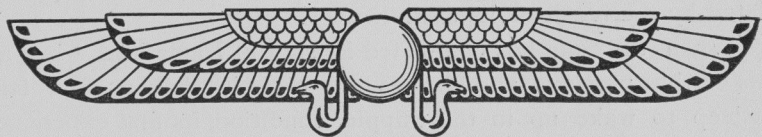


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

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DEVACHAN.*

Its Subdivisions -- Man's Life in Devachan -- Its Place in Evolution.

THE word "Devachan," literally translated, is "The Shining Land," or "The Land of the Shining Ones." Some call it "The Land of the Gods," and the "Happy Land."

Devachan is a specially guarded State belonging to the mind. Its peculiarity consists in its being entirely guarded from sorrow, or any other disturbing attack; it is a state of happiness. The average period in which the Soul resides in this place is 1500 years; but the length of time varies. When you compare this period with the brief term of life spent in the body, you will see that, looking at human life from the soul's standpoint, the greater part of the time is passed in happiness, and that the part spent upon the physical globe is unimportant as regards its length, though not so as regards its results. The only time that sorrow enters into human life is during the brief interludes passed in physical bodies. Try to realize that it is in Devachan that the Soul spends the greater part of its existence. Think of the Soul coming out of the transition land, Kama-loka, to this "Happy"

*Rough notes taken at Mrs. Besant's lecture, Queen's Hall, June 7, 1896.

or "Shining Land," and then consider how its life there is regulated by the result of its earth-life.

When the Soul has completed its stay in Kama-loka, when all its earthly passions and desires are entirely shaken off, it falls asleep to wake up in this happier condition, its first experience as it wakes being an overpowering sense of contentment and happiness. A man's first impression on opening his eyes is one of supreme bliss and intense happiness. He very quickly regains full consciousness, and then finds that he is not alone, but that he is surrounded by all those with whom he had, in earth-life, ties of affection. Such ties must, however, have been those of the higher nature, and free from any animal passion. This distinction must be made, because any tie in which there was animal passion would not hold. It would be every tie of affection in which the *mind* has entered—only this would bring the Soul into contact with another person.

It will be well to realize who is awakening, and in what body. In a world of the mind there could be no physical body; no contact from the lower world could reach here; and a person would have such consciousness as can reach him through the mind. The thoughts that have any power to assert themselves would be all connected with mind and intellect. The man has shaken off the physical and astral bodies; everything has gone connected with them. Death has broken them to pieces. Everything has passed out of the life of the man, and though he carries it in memory, nothing can meet him save those things into which he had put his mind.

His body is the Mind-body; and in proportion as he has developed this, will be the beauty and richness of his Devachanic life. If his earth-life has been poor, here will be found the same restrictions. He can but develop here the seeds—the germs—that he has sown in life; and where no seed has been sown, no flowers can blossom. So it is true that here you can only bring into perfection what you have commenced on earth. Your limitation is made by what you make here; the more you have made, the richer will be your experiences.

We think of our friends in this world partly by their bodily appearance, and this we can re-create in Devachan. By creative

power we mould the matter, and can reproduce the outer appearance of our friend's body. We really know very little of a friend here; we know nothing of his inner life or his higher nature; we know him only as he affects us.

If you were to come in contact with the nobler nature of some advanced being you know as man, you would be able to appreciate him more, for within him are ranges which you never touch. His greater part is shut away from us, and we find in him only as much as we can take; this is all such an one can give us. And the greater he is, the more he stretches outside of our comprehension, for he enters into that where we cannot find entrance. So it is only a part of our friend that we know, and we have to realize that there is a wall round everyone into which scarcely any other enters. Every soul has a place into which no other foot may tread. It is his Holy of Holies. And this wall none is able to enter in Devachan; but it is a mistake to think the contact of soul with soul is less there. It is *greater, nearer*, when our bodies are cast off, for we have a better understanding, and there are fewer veils of illusion. There is this difference when thinking of Devachan and of this world: down here we think everything real; when we go outside we see that all below is illusion; we see that people are living in the grossest illusion; we do not realize this here because we are in it. Devachan is less of a dream than your present life. The mental image that you form there is the outer appearance of the friend you wish to see; but how much of his soul will animate the image will depend on the state of advance that person has made. Very little of the Soul comes through here; so, in Devachan, if the Soul is but little developed there will be little reality in the mental image. As the Soul evolves, the contact becomes greater. Devachan is an evolving condition depending on the advance of the Soul, and the more real you are, the more real the Devachan becomes.

You will see how the Souls grow nearer as they develop the inner faculties. In the world of Soul there is no separation by time or space. This knowledge is of the greatest importance to us. If you can, in the world, come into contact with any friend at a distance, he would then be present to you. Space could make no division, and you could talk with him—if developed—

even in the physical world, by power of mind. In Devachan these powers are freer, not being impeded by the body. In accordance with the laws of mind when in contact with the mind of another, space makes no difference. Whether in a physical body or not, when communicating by mind, you could reach a friend wherever he is. Distance is no obstacle to the presence of all you love. With an advanced Soul there would be close contact. What is true here is true there; as we ascend, all becomes more clear according to the nature of our own development. One other word on the immense importance of coming into contact during physical life with souls who are more advanced than yourself: It is of very great advantage to come into contact with minds higher than your own. People may gain much from the greater minds of our race by study, by thought, by assimilation of their ideas.

In Devachan the mental world is divided into the Upper and Lower Divisions. In the Lower are four stages, in which we find people as we know them here, for this lower world belongs to the personality and its surroundings. Here we find the same likings, affinities, peculiarities, and the same artistic talents and emotional nature. The man who is in the lower part of Devachan will be found with all his special characteristics, with the difference that he will have got rid of all his imperfections, and that his qualities will be at their best and purest; not being hindered by a physical body, no physical advantage will exist, no qualities be dwarfed, and he will work clearly and definitely in this higher state, for in it we work at our best always, without disadvantages.

The *lowest* stage will belong to those, the highest part of whose life was showed in their affection to their family and friends, and who had nothing higher than this. It would be the noblest quality that they had shown, their mental capacities would be small, for this stage would include people whose mental powers were very poor. We will suppose that in addition such a person has had emotions which give to him the gleam of a nobler life. To illustrate this I take the case of a small group of people looked at from here. They were from the lowest of London slums and had been degraded and coarse all through their lives, in which there was very little to pick out free from animal passions. But

there was one thing which had lifted them and given them this possibility, and having it, it would bring them back to better opportunities and to be born with purer natures. It had come to them through the influence of one woman who had helped them. She was very poor, and possessed of but little intellect, but she was of a kind and gentle nature. She gave her love and charity freely to them; she shared their sorrow; she tried to help them; and the love that went out to her in gratitude gave them an ideal image in Devachan. She made for them this possibility: she took her part as their ideal, thus helping them to build qualities for the future.

In the next higher stage we are in touch with Souls who have had religious aspirations—those who have reached up to some spiritual life. The form of it may have been narrow enough, but it was the best they could do. Those who have loved their highest concept of the Divine, when they pass to this place realize their highest aspirations, formulated for them as they knew them here; a little more elevated, perhaps, but with their limitation. The Divine limits itself in order that we may touch it, and for these the Divine form is limited in the way found useful. People of every religion worship in this place in the way that they did here. The Divine wears to them the aspect that he wore on earth. Hindus are to be seen in the presence of that Deity to whom they gave devotion on earth. One phase of Hindu thought may exemplify the foregoing: If you take a Hindu woman of pure type and of an emotional and religious nature, you find a strange identification of her husband with *her ideal*. Marriage is to her a spiritual union. The husband is looked upon as the Symbol of the Spirit—developing life, and the wife as the mother of form—each the complement of the other—each representing what is lacking in the other. And so the woman identifies her husband with her Guide and Teacher, and the service she gives to him is accepted as given to a Teacher.

If you take the Christian religion you find that “heaven” depends on each person’s special conception. The Roman Catholics will find these the Virgin and Child. Salvationists will find their type of Jesus. Each will find what he hopes to find. When these Souls return to earth-life they will come back with tenden-

cies to a nobler form of religion. These lower stages are rich in result.

On the next two stages you find greater possibilities. Souls will be there who have developed more, and whose conceptions will be larger. They are older in evolution, and are devoted to a Divine ideal for whom they have worked earnestly on earth, where they had let their powers flow out in service to man. In this way they showed their love to man. You know such men and women. And they pass on to greater and grander possibilities. The fact that they exerted themselves down here gives them a claim, and we find them in Devachan with greater capabilities of understanding and more power of work, making schemes of beneficence. They are able to go through all these in thought, and they develop mental faculties which will enable them to carry out their plans when they return. They will be born as helpers to men. In this stage they are trained so that they come back as effective helpers. They are born again into the world in circumstances which will give them power of leadership.

When on the *First Division* you come to Souls whose great longing has been to acquire knowledge, and who have looked to the great Teachers in order to learn, and to make themselves able to hand on the teachings. Many are seen being taught by Masters who live only for the sake of teaching.

Entering into Devachan you have made a medium if while in the physical world you have looked to a Teacher.

One other word: You know how you may in reading a book come to the *soul* of the writer? The great writers are advanced Souls. You seem to know the writer when you turn to such writings as are given by Plato or by Emerson. Because of your love of study you come into contact with their thoughts. In the printed words you find living Souls—it was the Mind that spoke—and these words are living thoughts. As you come into touch with great writers the contents of their minds will pour out, and they will become your teachers. Anyone may make this possibility. All those who have been mighty artists, and the greatest geniuses, and who have used their talents nobly, are still enriching the world—are still sending out more. Their thoughts come down, and the benefactors of the past become our beacon lights, or all works out, and reaction spread outwards.

Such are those two stages where most work is done, and where the Leaders of Humanity are to be found. It helps the growth of the Ego to have power to distinguish the higher stages of the Soul's life. Suppose you rise higher, further, to the Formless World, the highest Stage. Here some Souls live for long centuries, passing to this region in absolute consciousness, ranging over all the worlds. On this highest level are the Souls of the greatest amongst us; they are in touch with the greater Ones; and the knowledge that they thus gain prepares them for discipleship. On that level only a few hundreds are living, but more are entering it.

The Souls of Masters and Initiates dwell on that level in connection with a physical body. They dwell in Soul there, and have bodies here to help Them in Teaching. Open to all is the highest level. Everyone who purifies himself and tries to rise higher, who strives to lead an unselfish life—seeking to give and not to get—and who is ever climbing toward the higher path, may reach it. On such death has no power.

These men take from their mind-bodies whatever is holy and weave it into their own Eternal Essence.

Devachan is the highest of heavenly places, and the noblest of all. Everyone in it is full of joy, and untouched with evil; everyone here enlarges his soul. As we sow, so shall we reap in it. All we are making that is worthy of it will live in it. Every noble thought, everything unselfish, every aspiration, is a wing which will lift you higher, for no effort is ever lost.

THE HUMAN AURA.

The original and interesting lecture of Dr. A. Marques on the "Human Aura," the publication of which through the Mercury Press has been unavoidably delayed, will be ready by the end of the month. It will make a neat little volume finely illustrated by many colored plates and cuts, and will be sold 40 cents in paper cover, and 70 cents bound in cloth. Orders received by Mercury Publishing Office, Native Sons' Building, San Francisco, California.

MERCURY.

SYNOPSIS

Of the Course of Lectures Given by G. R. S. Mead,
on the Later Platonists.

[These lectures dealing with the Neo-Platonic philosophy are not ostensibly Theosophic in their teaching, nevertheless any effort to popularize to some extent the Neo-Platonic teaching, and to bring before the outside public the general conditions of life and thought during the Neo-Platonic period when the early Christian Church was gaining power and authority, cannot but be of service to the Theosophical Society in its work.]

(Continued from the October Number.)

MR Mead's fifth lecture at the Pioneer Club was exceedingly well attended. The subject being the Women philosophers of the Neo-Platonic school. The lecturer referred to those women who followed the teachings of Pythagoras, especially to Aspasia, who became the wife of Pericles and the instructress of Socrates.

Appollonius states that there were sixty-nine women who were members of the Pythagorean school,—he refers to them as the “she philosophers.” Turning from these to the later Platonists, Mr. Mead mentioned the women disciples of Plotinus, and Marcella, the wife of Porphyry. Sosipatra, the wife of that great philosopher dispatched by Constantius as ambassador to Sapor, was born near Ephesus. When she was five years of age, two old men took charge of the vineyard of her father. Their cultivation of the vines was productive of such results that the father of Sosipatra, on visiting his property, wanted them to dine at his table. The men, struck by the beauty, modesty and intelligence of the child Sosipatra, said to the father that that which they had done for his vineyard was nothing, but that if he desired a true gift at their hands, he should suffer them to become “true fathers and instructors to this Sosipatra for five years.” The father consented, and at the expiration of five years he found the maiden marvelously advanced in learning and in occult knowledge. The old men, admitting themselves to be Chaldean Initiates, took leave of their pupil, delivering to her a robe of initiation, and tablets on which were inscribed the Chaldean oracles. Thenceforward she pursued her studies alone. Before her marriage she made a prediction that she should outlive her husband, and also that she should have by him three sons. These predictions were verified,

and Sosipatra stated that she perceived these coming events in the "eidolon" of her future husband. Her reputation as a teacher was great, and her lecture hall was crowded.

The wife of Maximus was even more learned than her husband; and one Melita became high priestess of Lydia.

Better known than these was Hypatia, the orator and philosopher, murdered by a band of fanatic monks under the leadership of Peter the Reader. In Kingsley's well known novel, Hypatia is represented as having been a young woman when she was dragged from her chariot into a Christian Church, stripped, and cut to pieces with oyster shells and potsherds. As a matter of fact, she was probably between fifty-five and sixty when she met with this horrible death. She was the daughter of Theon, the mathematician, and her mathematical knowledge was profound. She was not only deeply versed in philosophy and celebrated for her clear expositions and brilliant oratory, but she was also an authority on social and political questions, and her power with Orestes, the Roman governor, led to the jealousy which prompted her murder.

Synesius, bishop of Cyrene, was among her pupils, and his letters to her are extant. Hypatia calls him "Other's good" in allusion to his zeal for the welfare of the community.

In conclusion, Mr. Mead spoke of the daughter of Plutarch, the Neo-Platonist, who instructed Proclus in the chanting of the Chaldean oracles. He pointed out the connection between these chanted oracles, the Indian Mantras, and the lost chant of the psalms in the Jewish temples. Mr. Mead stated on the authority of a Vatican librarian that the old bulls of the Pope had a certain rhythmic measure, and that the ex-cathedra utterances of the "Vicar of Christ" were known only by their possession of this rhythm.

In the sixth and last lecture of his series, Mr. Mead sketched the life of Proclus and the influence of Neo-Platonic thought down to the present day, taking for his authority the Life of Proclus by one of his pupils. This writer ascribes to Proclus the political, cathartic and intellectual or contemplative virtues; he also ascribes to him the "four bodily virtues, perfection of sensation, strength, beauty and health," to which he gives their corresponding mental qualities:

Perfection of sensation—Prudence.

Strength—Fortitude

Beauty—Temperance.

Health—Justice.

Proclus was said to have no fear of death, owing to the fact that he was familiar with the after-death conditions of the soul.

He was never married, and left his wealth to his school and to his slaves, to whom he was much attached, as he was to his friends.

He was born in Byzantium in 412, and studied in Alexandria. At the age of twenty he went to Athens and studied under Plutarch. At twenty-four he commenced the study of Plato, and finally began to write commentaries on his works. He actively practised the political virtues, and was attentive to religious ceremonies, praying, fasting and leading an ascetic life. He was a rigid vegetarian. In the third or contemplative state, he taught that the senses are unified, and direct vision obtained.

Neo-Platonic thought has influenced down to the present day. It impressed the more learned fathers of the Church as shown in the book of Dionysius, the Areopagite, which was based upon the teachings of Proclus.

The writings of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus show its influence as do also the schools of St. Bernard and Bonaventura, and the Brothers of the Free Spirit in the Thirteenth century, and the German Mystics of the Fourteenth.

At the Renaissance, when the philosophers were driven to Florence, we have Greek thought taught from the text, and the rise of Giordano Bruno, teaching facts which were known in the Pythagorean school. We have also the reaction from the teaching of Descartes in Spinoza, Kant and Hegel.

In the Seventeenth century we have Andworth in England, and in the Eighteenth century Thomas Taylor translated fifty volumes which are being reprinted. There is no question as to the revival of interest in the Greek philosophy in Europe at the present day.

Mr. Mead directed the attention of his audience to a possible cause for this recurrent effect by concluding his valuable series of lectures with the significant words:

“You cannot kill thought—nor men.”

I. P. H.

THOUGHTS FOR THE MORROW AND THE
COMING YEAR.

AS the mantle of night descends upon the city, bringing a well-earned truce in the battle for existence, there are some who will take advantage of this brief respite to come in closer sympathy with the great, drowsy world and its pressing needs. My thoughts are with them constantly. As the needle feels and responds to the grand sweep of the magnetic current, so the strong impulse of a common sympathy that moves them enfolds me also, and encourages me to write the following article. It is both pleasurable and consoling to recognize this bond, this silent power that gathers us in its embrace, the known and the unknown, whose force is maintained and increased by the projected force of the individual units within its circuit.

Fraters of this mystic circle, by whatever names ye are known in the world, this brief night, this breathing time, this time for the ingathering of potency, will soon be over, and a new day be upon us. How shall we meet it? Among all our diverse gifts there are some that we hold in common; among the latter is the realization that Truth is everywhere existent. Then let us go forth on the morrow, accepting as our mission the revealing of Truth, as we find it hidden in the hearts of our fellow-men. Let this new day be a day of brightness to them. The revelation of Truth in us has been a joy to us; then let us not forget that it is "glad tidings" that we desire to bring to them.

To wrangle or to vilify is not to give "glad tidings." Then let us observe the virtue of forbearance. Let us meet the world "on the level," as the Masons say; for if we would lift one up, we cannot do so by standing upon a pinnacle. We must get down to them—to their level; and even then it will often be necessary to put aside all appearance of intending to uplift, if we do not wish our effort to be wasted.

It sometimes pays to "make haste slowly," to gain by indirect means what would otherwise be lost.

The world that we will meet on the morrow is Christian. If we begin it by raillery, we shall probably end it devoid of fruitful service in the cause of either Truth or Brotherhood. I once,

as a Theosophist, had the pleasure of meeting an influential man, a most bitter opponent of the philosophy. I did not argue and combat with him; but by a word now and then, led him to express, in better terms than I could have done, thoughts that were mine as well as his. At the end of half an hour I had not made a "Theosophist," in name, of him, but I had changed a foe into a friend. Had I pursued the common tactics, I would have done neither. Let us remember this experience to-morrow. As a badge of his or her faith, some friend of ours may wear a cross. How little he or she will know about that sacred emblem in all likelihood. Here is an opportunity for us to reveal its hidden beauty of thought, its grand philosophy, and its significant Truths:

The bisected circle, the quartered, the line and plane of consciousness, of vision, the illuminating, descending ray, equilibrium.

As we proceed the light of that ray will be manifested in our friend, illuminating the understanding. Afterward they will not fail to remember that we, a *Theosophist*, or whatever other "ist" we may call ourself, lifted the veil; and the seed that is sown will bear good fruit in its season. Not even the doctrine of "vicarious atonement" need be a serious hindrance to brotherly converse, to a philosopher of unity and brotherhood.

For he will have noted that even in the world's penal system the idea is involved. The knowledge of one's liberty restrained or life forfeited, has as one of its purposes the bringing to bear upon all others an influence that may help to prevent them committing criminal transgressions. Let it be borne in mind that we are treating upon the *ideal* of the system. Bearing in mind, among other things, the influence of example, we shall be tolerant toward our friend even in this, and thereby gain at least one point—toleration for ourself. And it will be remembered in our favor that a Theosophist can differ from his friend without reviling. And it shall come to pass that men will say that a philosophy which makes men charitable cannot be essentially bad. I beg leave to express a few thoughts in reference to the "atonement," not as defending the doctrine, but as showing *one* way in which the question may be met without exciting such strife as

will serve neither Truth nor brotherhood. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." So spake one whom the whole civilized world reveres as "Master." I have often thought what a wonderful claim that was to make. How could His suspension between heaven and earth be the means of drawing all men unto Him? Years of pondering brought the answer.

There is a good side to man's nature that unavoidably responds to the appeals of goodness. So when men gaze upon that vision of Calvary with enlightened eyes, their own sense of appreciation will lead them to exclaim: Though despised and rejected of men, full of love and pity for them in their blindness and misfortunes, He shrank not from persecution; even an ignominious death did not daunt his lofty spirit, striving to reclaim man from the fleshpots of Egypt, as it were.

As man gazes upon that scene, and a realization of the majesty of such a character comes to him, an abiding sense of the surpassing beauty and grandeur of that Love sacrificed and despised, leaving Him *alone*, though the world stood by, the mute appeal which that spectacle makes will not, can not go unheeded. The spiritually enlightened man will be drawn towards that self-sacrificing personification of love and devotion towards humanity. Sympathy will respond to sympathy, love to love.

The result of a profound appreciation of the scene will be a better life stimulated by the abiding presence of that great sacrifice before one's eyes. Since that death brings with it a grand revelation to the living, it may very justly be said of them that truly know them, that they are "saved" from death (spiritual) through His dying.

There is nothing revolting in that any more than there is in parental or fraternal devotion that is carried to the point of self-sacrifice. The enlightened among us can go further and show that this supreme act does not make evil and guilt acceptable for His sake, but makes them impossible for those that have "received" Him, by supplying an incentive to righteousness, and power sufficient to overcome evil. Having established ourself in the heart of our Christian brother, we will proceed to show the further significance of that Divine tragedy; how the elevation of that perfect man upon the cross, between heaven and earth, sym-

bolizes the uplifting of the real man, now degraded to the dust of materiality, to his true place as the cross formed of the union of heaven and earth (the Divine and the material), the manifestation of them in equilibrium, four right-angle triangles, exactly quartering the circle, etc. This that is dawning for us will be a glorious morrow; one in which the substratum of truth that every system contains will be revealed, and error be overcome not by revilings but by love and truth, whose potent rays will dispel the darkness and mist that has gathered about our hearts and minds, concealing the wondrous treasures of Wisdom from our eyes. Let us then labor and wait for the coming of this bright to-morrow.

CHAS. H. CONNOR.

“A CITY OF THE MINES.”

I DREAMT that I was taken to a far-off city—a City of the Mines, I was told. It was so dark there that I shuddered. Somehow I descended through the roof to the winding corridors and wandered for a long time seeking those I could not find. At last I came upon the site of what appeared to be a Temple—deserted by its builders for a space. I saw trowels, gauges and mallets lying upon the great masses of stone that were being hewn into blocks and pillars.

As I stood watching, the workers came again to their task. It seems they had asked from the Lord of their land that a Temple might be builded; for none such had ever been thought of until now. But their Lord had said: “Build ye a Temple for yourselves—make the time for such as you will—but remember that the work that has been planned for you must not be shirked—the duties that are demanded of you must to their uttermost be fulfilled.” So the people had a meeting to decide how best to set about this great undertaking. They had no materials, no means of getting it. There were riches among them in the hands of a few only—and the others toiled that these few might have more. There was jealousy and strife and hatred that these had all the best, the others but the dross and refuse for their share. Frequent were the broils and frictions, till all alike were sick of such disharmony. There was no peace nor unity—for each strove for

his neighbor's possession and grudged his fellows what they still retained.

But some one, none knew who, had spoken of a plan to build a Temple, such as other cities had. Some energetic ones had called upon the citizens and urged all aid and speed that soon the Temple might be builded in their midst. The meeting had so filled them with enthusiasm that each promised his own labor, wealth and time till every stone lay in its place. And thus the work had prospered. It had done more than this ; for it had united in one willing band all those dissentient souls. Each one had striven, not as of old to gain for self some worthless end, but to give, to give—every man his best. Those who were workers, fared, thus, better than the rest, for they could give the labor of their hands—give of themselves, and in this work *that* counted most.

I saw one standing there of portly form who had spent his substance in good living heretofore, now mourning repeatedly that he could not work—that his allotment was only the furnishing of material purchased by his wealth—and this accounted in far meaner way than those who formed the Temple with their hands.

I saw another one—a low thieving scamp he'd been in former days,—and how he worked and wrought great iron beams and clamps—his grimy face and form surrounded by a meteor-like atmosphere of living golden sparks—and he was honored by them all!

And so the building rose. I heard the clang of hammer and sounds of busy, hurrying feet. And I was told of all the changes that had taken place in each one's heart, songs and merry laughter now pealed forth where once had echoed strife ; a harmony prevailed such as it was hard to think had but existed since the first stone was laid ; thus the citizens learned what such fellowship was worth.

And by and bye the structure was completed save the roof. This I was told was far too heavy to be raised if it once touched the ground, and so it was to be lowered from above—a task that called in service every craftsman in the City of the Mines. For its receipt and placement, great cranes and pulleys had been forged—forged by the sacrifice of loving hands and hearts.

How was the city lighted you will ask? Yes ! true, I quite

forgot to say that as the workmen gathered round me at the first, gradually the darkness disappeared, and I discovered that the light was from themselves. Each man, woman and child had formed a light within their hearts, and shining out so bright and clear it changed the night to day. Thus too they worked; for by that light their fair white Temple had been raised.

I was bidden stay and see it when complete, and waiting, watched descend the mighty roof. Hewn of a piece it seemed, one solid, triangular mass, polished, graven and ready to be mortised upon the chiseled and wrought pillars by willing labor and sacrifice of self, and at its apex shone a white dazzling light, which illuminated with its effulgent radiance the whole of that City of the Mines!

FIO HARA, F. T. S.

THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

QUESTION CCCL.

I very much dislike anything with the name "secret" about it. If Theosophy has discovered some new truths, it seems to me that they should be classified and arranged to form a science, and openly given to the world as are other scientific truths. Let facts be given as they are, without any air of mystery about them. And such facts should be thoroughly studied and understood so far as possible, before one attempts any experiments of that character.

FIO HARA.—The fact of certain Theosophical or other teachings being withheld from the public at large does not necessarily infer that there is any air of mystery surrounding them, or that because they are withheld that they are secret. It simply means that they are veiled from the public until such a time as that public—notably its scientific portion—is ripe enough in understanding and intelligence to grasp their deeper meaning.

How, for instance, would an abstruse problem in Conic Sections or theorem in higher mathematics be understood by a kindergarten class? But when those children have, through a course of severe mental training, reached a stage where the un-

derstanding of such becomes possible—these and more will be placed within their reach.

Or again, feed a child on highly-spiced viands and rich confections. What is the result? We are simply creating disharmonious elements within, and the parts refuse to function as on normal diet. It is the same with older folk; given mental food such as they can assimilate, they digest it readily; but where it is found not to be compatible with the training and environment of their present capacity, is it not wise to withhold rather than overload?

Many there are, even in the T. S. that cannot accept some of its fundamental tenets—people who can see no reason for reincarnation; are not in fact as yet able to postulate such a theory as that they have lived before or will again—since they cannot remember those past lives. To numbers of T. S. members the fact that there are archetypal senses latent in themselves is totally beyond their credence, let alone their utilization. It is all very mysterious to them; yet to those who have proved the existence of such, nothing is hidden—nothing is secret.

Theosophy is nothing if it is not just. Yet it would not be were it unwise enough to expect persons who cannot accept the ordinary statements it postulates, to receive mystical systems of astronomical computations of cycles, and other more advanced teachings.

Until people are sufficiently trained both mentally and morally, surely in justice to them and to the Teachers of those doctrines, portions of such truths—which, by the way, Theosophy has not discovered, but simply brought forward from the world's treasure-house—are only given out in just such proportions as will insure them from misrepresentation and misuse at the hands of ignorant, selfish men, and in the manner that can be best utilized for the good of humanity at this present stage of its evolution.

QUESTION CCCLI.

If we judge of Christianity by its practical effects upon the lives of professing Christians, why not of Theosophy by its practical effects upon the lives of professing Theosophists? Does not the same rule hold, and is a judgment formed upon it very cheering to sincere Theosophists?

A. F.—In general the principle is quite correct: in homely language, “the proof of the pudding is in the eating.” In fact, it is the only practicable test, for theories as to cogency of motive and as to regeneration of human life must remain mere theories until demonstrated by application. In applying this test, however, the first and most indispensable condition to accuracy is that the doctrine thus tested shall be the same in the subjects as in the system. There is obviously no test whatever if the person professing adherence to a certain system either does not really believe it or mistakingly perverts some of its essential features. Hypocrisy or error vitiates the case. It is not probable that in Christendom there are many conscious, deliberate impostors; but it is certain that its distinctive doctrine cannot have been grasped, inasmuch as the conflicts of sects and schools show the differences of opinion as to what that doctrine is. Now if one cannot determine what really constitutes Christianity, how is it possible to determine whether or not any particular individual has right to the name “Christian”?

Perhaps the only practicable method is to reduce the system to its ethical department and to derive that from the teachings of its Founder. Clearly his ethics were of love, peace, sincerity, strict respect to others’ rights, faithfulness in duty, fraternal sympathy, and Divine service. Allowing for human infirmity and inconsistency, a so-called “Christian” who does not exhibit these traits is not an example of what those ethics enjoin, and hence cannot be cited as proof of either their efficacy or their inefficacy.

But here arises an important question: If an enormous proportion of Christendom is now, after its career of 1800 years, in palpable contrast to all that was most insisted on by Christ himself, does not the fact show an inadequate power to cope with human nature as it is? In other words: If the function of a religion is to transform human nature, and if after long trial a specific religion has failed to effect that transformation, is not this proof that the motives or the help provided are insufficient for the function, and hence that some other religion to do the work must be sought?

This conclusion cannot be avoided if we assume that historic Christianity is the Christianity had in view by Christ; but does not follow if we take the ground that his religion did not contain both sound doctrine and competent motive, and that later failure is because both have been disregarded. One valuable part of recent Theosophic work is the showing that Jesus held and taught the very truths which came down from the ancient Wisdom Religion, and that the restoration of these would vitalize again his system.

The first part of the Answer may be thus summed up: One may properly judge of actual Christianity by the exhibit it makes in the lives of its adherents; one cannot so judge of original or real Christianity unless it can be shown that modern Christians correctly interpret the teachings of Jesus; if those teachings are palpably violated by any professed follower he is clearly not a true follower, and it would therefore be unfair to hold the religion responsible for the exact opposite of its injunctions; in order to estimate justly the religion of Christ, we must restore to it those vital components which have dropped out in the passage of centuries.

Now apply these principles to the case of Theosophists. If avowed disciples really understand the teachings and yet manifest no higher conception of life and duty than do other people, there may certainly arise an inference that the moral forces of the system are insufficient for their work. But this inference would be unjust until that understanding is shown. It may well be that even avowed disciples greatly misconceive Theosophical principle, and cannot exhibit that which they do not truly possess. If they do not possess it and consequently cannot exhibit it, neither they nor their conduct can be taken as illustrations of true philosophy. As in the case of Christianity, the true doctrine can only be ascertained by going to the fountain head, *i. e.*, the deposit held from immemorial time, or the teachings given out by genuine Teachers certainly known as among the custodians, and therefore the authorized exponents of the truth held by the Lodge. If in any instance of inconsistent life such truth is assuredly held by the inconsistent liver, there is still a possibility either that he has merely an intellectual grasp without a moral

apprehension, or that his interior being has not yet adequately absorbed the moral and spiritual forces which are inherent in the system and which are really competent to reform character.

Moreover, there are two considerations which must in equity be allowed place in applying to Theosophists the test inquired of. The first is that all such tests are only just when applied to masses of men. Any single individual presents too many complications and too many unknown factors. But if the general level of an association is above or below that outside, we may infer the greater or less potency of its principles. The other is that Theosophy has been too recently received by the West to permit ample test of its influence. Fifteen years are not enough for full effect of doctrinal reception, moulding of character, provision of material for large generalization. These can become palpable only as time multiplies converts, trains each in consistency, give chance for impression on public sentiment.

Finally. If we can find any clear instance where Theosophy has effected what other systems have failed to effect, we must concede to it a greater moral efficiency. If its general influences are seen to be uplifting, there must be an uplifting power within. Whether this is a fact or not, individuals must judge for themselves. And yet there would seem to be very clear evidence in experience and in the history of the Society that the sincere reception of Theosophic principle *does* produce a healthier view of life, a higher standard of duty, and deeper realization of spiritual verities. If so, the test inquired of gives results of both cheer and hope.

NOTICE.

Questions to be dealt with in the next and subsequent issues of the *Forum*. Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

1. *Is it not impossible for any one to live a purely unselfish and altruistic life according to the ideas of brotherhood while obtains the competitive system which condemns so many to poverty and compels each one to look out for self?*

2. *Was the following dream a foreshadowing merely, or was it a designed lesson? how did it come? Please explain. One night lately in my dreaming consciousness I was with an epileptic in*

one of the crises, and I seemed to know that it was a case of obsession which could be cured by exorcising the evil presence. I commanded it to depart. The very next day I was called to help a person who had an epileptic fit.

T. S. ECHOES.

Theosophical Society.

AMERICAN SECTION.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,

5 UNIVERSITY PLACE, NEW YORK CITY.

To the Branch Presidents and Secretaries, and to the members of the American Section T. S.:

The impossibility of often writing the following matter makes necessary its being put in print for the information and guidance of officials and members of the Section.

Soon after the secession of Branches and members from the T. S. and the formation of Mr. Judge's Society, a case arose of a seceded member desirous to return. I gave an official opinion, but at once submitted for decision to the President-Founder a memorandum covering all cases that might arise. He gave it his endorsement, adding thereto some remarks which will be given below.

These cases are four:—

I. That of a person, member of the T. S. leaving it to join Mr. Judge's Society but wishing restoration to the T. S. *Decision:* If wishing membership-at-large, he has only to apply in writing to the General Secretary and ask restoration; if membership in a Branch, to the Branch Secretary asking election into the Branch. If able to pay the dues of \$1.00 to this office for the current year, he should do so; if unable, these dues will be waived. He should erase from his diploma the endorsement by the official of Mr. Judge's Society, that Society being in no way a part of or connected with the Theosophical Society, and an indorsement by its official having no effect on the validity of a T. S. document, but being out of place thereon.

II. That of a Branch of the T. S., seceding therefrom to join Mr. Judge's Society but wishing restoration to the T. S. *Decision:* The action of the Branch should be officially communicated by its Secretary to the General Secretary, and replacement on the roll requested. The endorsement by an official of Mr. Judge's Society should be erased from its charter. If the old charter is not in existence, a duplicate will be issued, the fee to be waived if the members are unable to pay it.

III. That of a person entering Mr. Judge's Society without having been previously a member of the T. S., and now desirous to join the T. S. *Decision*: Never having been or become a member of it, he needs to apply in the usual form and with the prescribed fees, precisely as any other outsider; but if poor, the fees will be waived.

IV. That of a Branch chartered by Mr. Judge's society but desirous to become a Branch of the T. S. *Decision*: Never having been a Branch of the T. S., it can receive a charter only by application in the usual form and with the prescribed fees, precisely as in any other case; but if poor, the fees will be waived. Seven applicants are now necessary for procurement of Branch charter.

The two principles governing the matter are very simple. They are, *first*, that Mr. Judge's Society is an organization outside of and distinct from the Theosophical Society, as much so as the Free Masons or Odd Fellows, and the membership in it can be no more a passport to the T. S. than can membership in either of those bodies; but that, *second*, sincere persons having entered it in ignorance or through delusion, persons really interested in Theosophy and the work belonging to the T. S., it is only right that no unavoidable obstacle should be placed in their way when learning the facts and seeking union with the Society. The following extracts from Col. Olcott's letter are to the point:—

"My policy is to make it as easy for them to come back as I did to let them go out. I want no tyranny, no compulsion, no red-tape. * * * I want to abstain from anything like censoriousness or abuse, to keep always the even mind of the believer in Karma, thus abstaining from widening the breach and making it hard for people to resume their places in our ranks. * * I want you all to realize that my whole policy since the beginning is to have as little red-tape as possible, while keeping up the Society as a substantially organized body, based upon a fixed Constitution and held together by equitable Rules. * * It seems to me that the present undoubted strength of our body is a full vindication of my administrative policy, a policy that I have stuck to despite constant and violent opposition."

It is hoped that this clear exposition will make the matter plain to our officers and members, and enable them to give information when desired.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON,

Gen. Sec'y American Section T. S.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION, OCTOBER, 1896.—The chief interest of this section just now centers in the General Secretary's visit to the South, which is proceeding in a very satisfactory manner. The first place called at was Nelson, where Miss Edger gave three lectures, "Theosophy and its Teachings," "Karma and Reincarnation," and "Religion and Theosophy;" the three as a whole forming a good epitome of Theosophical teachings. The first giving a general outline, dealing with the objects of the Society, the Theosophical theory as to Deity—as being that something behind nature manifesting intelligence, power, love, goodness, purity, but so infinitely above and beyond human comprehension that it was best in reverence and awe to acknowledge one's inability to understand, and not seek further to define the

nature of man, working of natural laws, higher forms of matter, etc., and stating that in everything throughout nature was the spirit of the Divine, the Divine Ray. In the second Miss Edger urged that a grave responsibility rested upon each person to guard and watch over his or her thoughts, so that the thought waves or vibrations might be conducive to what was pure and good, as good thoughts and words and actions produced harmony and evil ones disharmony, and the latter produced all suffering. The third dealt a good deal with orthodox beliefs, and during the course of it the lecturer said she considered that the inner meaning of the Bible was an inexhaustible mine of truth, that if one tenth part of its teachings were given heed to by man, the world would be much better than it is. In conclusion she said she had not one word to say to those who were satisfied with their religious belief, and she claimed the same toleration, and that Theosophy should not be considered anti-Christian. Her sole desire was to throw light on difficult problems that might be perplexing some minds.

Nelson is one of the smaller cities of New Zealand, and so far there is not a Branch of the Theosophical Society there, but the lectures were very well attended, the audiences at each numbering about two hundred. They caused much interest, and at the close a good many questions were asked. A very good *resume* of each was given in the local newspapers; altogether it seems that the Theosophical teachings are exciting a good deal of public interest in the district. As a practical outcome of the Nelson lectures, two groups have been formed for the study of Theosophical literature, meeting at the house of Mrs. Saxon, one of the oldest members in New Zealand and a very devoted and earnest worker, one in the afternoon, and the other, composed principally of young men, in the evening. It is hoped that the two groups will amalgamate.

Wellington was the next place visited. Several lectures were given here to very good audiences, but Wellington being the seat of Government, and Parliament being in session at the time, interest in Theosophical matters was probably rather overshadowed by public affairs in this city.

During the month lectures have been given at the various Branches: the most northerly, Auckland, and the most southerly, Dunedin, being generally the most active in this respect. The other activities, classes, etc., go on as usual.

Ceylon Letter.

COLOMBO, CEYLON, SEPTEMBER, 1896.—You will be pleased to hear that the building of the new wing is going ahead and the work will be completed about February next, when not only the Musæus School and Orphanage, but our Theosophic center and editorial offices of our little *Rays of Light* will have more breathing space than before. We owe a deep

debt of gratitude to our dear brother, Wilton Hack, for his generous help in the extension of our work. I may mention that the trustees of the Institution are Mrs. Marie M. Higgins, Colonel Olcott, Wilton Hack, Dr. English and Peter de Abrew. The site for the buildings has been donated by the last named.

Our dear brother, Mr. Staples, paid us a visit early this month on his way to Europe from Australia. He was the guest of Mrs. Higgins at the Institution during the stay of the steamer at Colombo. We hope to see our brother on his return journey.

We also had a brief visit from the Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar of Calcutta. He, as your readers know, is the chief of the Brahmo-Saraj and represented that cult at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. The visitor was quite interested in the work of Mrs. Higgins and he was delighted to see and hear of the active and philanthropic work of the Theosophical Society.

In our new building ample allowance has been made for visitors, and we will be most happy to offer a hearty welcome to all friends visiting Ceylon.

Our dear Colonel is expected next month on his return journey from Europe. Mrs. Besant will arrive in Bombay in a couple of weeks.

We enjoy the reading of *MERCURY* very much and welcome it with delight. May it receive every encouragement, and we wish it all success.

CHIPS.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.—Ishwara Branch, T. S., has met regularly throughout the year, holding a public meeting every Wednesday evening. In the last month ten new members have been received and the branch is preparing for a winter of active propaganda. It has just secured new quarters, a beautiful room in the Masonic Temple. This will be kept open every afternoon through the volunteer aid of Mrs. Catherine J. Staples for the reception of inquirers and the sale of literature. The branch has a circulating library for members free, and loans books for the nominal sum of five cents for two weeks to outsiders. Besides the direct work of the branch, our President, Mrs. Buffington Davis, holds regular Thursday "at homes" for inquirers and conducts a Monday evening Secret Doctrine class at her residence. A Secret Doctrine class is held at the branch from seven to eight preceding regular meeting every Wednesday night.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., NOVEMBER, 1896.—Golden Gate Branch of the Theosophical Society opened the month by having W. J. Colville present at the meeting, and instead of spending the evening in conversation and entertainment, as had been agreed for the first Wednesday of every month, listened to the replies made by this remarkable man to questions pro-

pounded by those present. There was a large attendance and a very interesting and profitable evening was spent.

The study evenings of the month have been taken up with short papers and remarks on the general subject of "Creation", questions being distributed at each meeting to be answered the following week, if possible.

The training class held Friday evening is doing good work, and the members are already beginning to show the benefit of this training.

Lectures have been delivered each Sunday evening at Portola Hall, Native Sons Building, with large attendances. The lecturers for the month have been W. J. Colville (two lectures) Count Axel Wachtmeister, and Mr. Will C. Bailey.

J. C. B.

NARADA T. S., TACOMA, WASHINGTON.—We have emerged from our enforced quietude under the vivifying influence of the Countess Wachtmeister's presence, and as the public has now had the advantage of listening to her excellent and lucid discourses on Theosophical subjects, we hope to re-establish in the community the former influence of the Narada Branch in the cause of true Theosophy. We have taken a room centrally located; have it nicely furnished and hold meetings every Thursday and Sunday evenings, to which the public is invited. The Countess was with us two weeks, giving four lectures which were well attended, and holding receptions the afternoon and evening after each lecture. Her presence here has done very much to revive the faith of our members in the future of the Theosophical Society here in America.

With fraternal greetings,

IDA S. WRIGHT, President Narada Branch.

SANTA CRUZ, CAL.—Good news comes from Lorenzo Branch. The members are at work on the Seven Principles of Man by Mrs. Besant and they are enthusiastic about the future.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.—Ananda Lodge is proving itself to be an energetic working organization.

The interest which the Countess Wachtmeister awakened in Seattle has not been allowed to decline.

The lodge numbers thirty-one members, many of them enthusiastic and active. Public meetings are held every Sunday evening, the room being filled and sometimes crowded. The meetings on Wednesday evenings for study prove interesting and profitable.

An H. P. B. training class and a Secret Doctrine class for Friday evening have been started. At the first of these meetings five minute speeches on Reincarnation were demanded by the chairman and some very brave attempts were made by members unaccustomed to speaking in public.

Afternoon meetings in different parts of the city have been started.

Arrangements have been made for a monthly social.

Books have been donated to the library and a number of books have been sold by members, who consider this an excellent method of bringing the truths of Theosophy to the great reading public.

We hope that through these many activities much good will be accomplished and Seattle continue to be a center of Theosophic thought.

HARRIET C. STEIN, Secretary.

NOTICE.

The managing Editor of MERCURY respectfully requests that until further notice all correspondence and orders relative to the magazine and books be addressed to Count A. R. Wachtmeister, Room 5, Native Sons' Building, San Francisco, Cal.

BOOK REVIEWS.

LOTUS BLEU, September.—The number opens with "The Human Aura" by Mr. Leadbeater. "The Astral Plane" by the same author is completed. Guymiot has a very suggestive paper on "Intelligence." He divides thoughts into two classes, the emigrants and the stay-at-homes. Thinkers send forth their ideas with the command "Grow and multiply and if it be necessary to conquer and destroy that ye may grow and multiply, then conquer and destroy." "All the animal species of the physical world have their corresponding types in the mental world; there are intellects that produce mental insects, reptiles or birds or quadrupeds." Dr. Pascal continues his excellent treatise on "Luciferianism". "The Glossary," "Theosophic Echoes" and Reviews complete the magazine proper. Sixteen pages of the Secret Doctrine containing the Stanzas of Dzyan form a distinct part.

THE VAHAN, October.—"Literary Notes" reviews the second volume of Upanishads (now ready). The reviewer ends by saying: "The books are small, the contents mighty; the translators are nothing, the teachers are sages." "Enquirer" discusses "Whether the Christian Fathers believed in Reincarnation." "The Reincarnation of Buddha," "Thought and Elemental Essence" and "Do the Adepts Inhabit their Physical Bodies for Periods much longer than that of Ordinary Life?" Mr. Leadbeater's answer has such a practical bearing on the questions of health and longevity that we quote most of it: "The physical body of the Adept is first of all always in absolutely perfect health, and the conditions under which it exists are naturally of the most favorable description. We are told that but little food, and that only of the simplest and purest kind, is usually taken by these great ones. But what is of far more importance than these physical conditions in promoting longevity is the entire freedom from all anxiety and

mental disturbance which is one of the most prominent characteristics of the Adept; his face is stamped always with a holy calm, a joyous serenity, the 'peace that passeth all understanding.' This mental and spiritual state reacts even upon the physical body, and reduces its wear and tear to the minimum."

THE BRAHMAVADIN, September.—The editorial sets forth "The Aims of Life and how to Realize Them." "To know the nature of God, the nature of the soul and the relation between God and the soul is really to know how and for what purpose to live." Swami Kripawanda writes an interesting and learned article on the Talmud. A list of parallel passages between the New Testament and the Talmud add greatly to its value. Yogananda explains the Vedanta as it appears to the American mind.

THE THEOSOPHIC GLEANER, Bombay. With the September number this valuable eclectic begins its sixth year. In "H. P. B. as a Freemason" it republishes from the *Lamp* the Masonic Diploma which proves H. P. B. to have been a 33 d. Mason, the Diploma is duly signed by very noted Masons. The other articles are "The True Theosophist" by Dr. Nishikanti Chattopadhyaya, "Have We Three Eyes?" "The Three Qualities," "Biblical Fallibility."

THE VEGETARIAN, Chicago.—A bright, newsy little sheet devoted to the cause of healthful food,—the living food of grains and fruit. The Chicago vegetarians will give a vegetarian banquet on Thanksgiving Day followed by addresses from noted speakers who advocate true, pure food.

TEOSOFISK TIDSKRIFT for April, May and September.—Besides translations, convention reports, etc., these numbers contain some original articles on the question of the Higher Manas in its relation to the lower: whether it is possible for the intellect to be a judge of spiritual matters. This question has led to a very lively discussion, the affirmative view being held by Mr. Sven-Nilsson and Miss Von Betzen. They maintain that our spiritual faculties are not fully developed; it is the function of our intellect, of our lower Manas, to guard against false impulses, and that no intuition should be accepted unless it is in full accord with the rationalizing principle. Dr. Zander maintains that true inspirations are a proof in themselves of their truth, and that it is they that illuminate our intellects, often clouded by our emotions; therefore, he says, the intellect can never be a guide to our intuitions. This seems going a little too far; it is quite true that our senses are limited, and that it is possible for us to receive inspirations which could not be gained through our intellect, but on the other

hand, it is easy to mistake a false inspiration for a true one, and if we do not use our judgment, we are liable to make very great mistakes, and run after false ideals which lead us further off from the goal we are seeking. There ought always to be perfect harmony between intellect and intuition, and we can never do wrong in following the Buddha's advice: "Believe nothing which is unreasonable, and reject nothing as unreasonable without proper examination."

Received—*The Prasnottara, Rays of Light, Awakened, India, Occult Review, Temple of Health.*

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

HOW THE DIVINE NATURE REVEALS ITSELF THROUGH PHYSICAL NATURE.

So much has been written about the imperfection of matter, of this earth being a vale of sorrow and distress, a place which the pilgrim should try to leave as soon as possible, that I would attempt to present another side of the picture, worthy of consideration for the mind which is striving towards the perfection of its ideal. You, man of thoughts and feelings manifold, who are suffering from constant contact with the sordid side of nature, working wholly on the material plane, perchance to gain a living, or for the benefit of others; when your spirit seems oppressed and you long for something to lift you to higher spheres, then walk out and commune with yourself and see the bright side of nature, "nature unadorned by man," and if you live in this country, you will not have very far to go. If you are near the plains, go out into the fields and let your eyes gaze into the vast expanse in front of you and let your lungs inhale the fresh air; then lift your head and gaze into the sky and feel the boundless infinity, which is your birthright, which is you yourself, and let its calming influence penetrate your heated brain and sooth the throbs of your heart. If you live near the forest, you will find even more to delight your heart and mind. Here you will see Nature in all its beauty, hills and valleys covered with lovely foliage, and running streams and brooks with crystal water. If you have an eye for color, you will notice all the different tints blending into each other in perfect harmony, and if an ear for sound, all the bustle of the leaves, the trickling of the brooks, will appeal to you as would an orchestra of exquisite music, constant and varied. Have you a sense for form, you will be surprised what beauty there is in the manifestation of both organic and inorganic matter. You will admire the tall

firs, rugged giants, pointing upwards ever higher and higher, just as they were trying to reach heaven, you will delight in the moss and ever-green covering the rocks, and every little flower and fern will cause you a fresh exclamation of delight. You will wonder why you never saw the hidden beauty of these little things before. And the bright sun, shining through yonder tree, will help you in your investigation lending more clearness to the picture. A single ray, coming down through space, will touch the spray of a cascade, and become refracted into seven colors, forming a charming little rainbow. Everywhere around, you will find beauty and harmony, and the thought will involuntarily arise in your mind: Where is the artist, who formed all this, where the magician who can produce such exquisite effects? You will at once repudiate the theory of the materialist who tells you that everything is due to chance; you feel this cannot be so the whole of your artistic nature rebels against such a notion. You will look to some kind spirit above, some guardian angel, who watches this place, his particular pet child. If you are versed in occult lore, you will know that all thoughts are things, and that all these beautiful objects around you may be the thoughts of those bright intelligences above, whom you do not see, but whose presence you may feel, just as you would feel the presence of a friend far away. You will be longing to be able to think such thoughts yourself and produce such beautiful effects, and you will take care that no ugly thought enter your mind. If you are of an enquiring turn of mind, you will wonder by what means it is that these thoughts can take such beautiful forms. You will notice a beautiful white lily and the aromatic scent which it gives out. You will also notice the fragrant odor of the pine, and a little flower, the Linnea, which gives a very faint odor, almost imperceptible. You will conclude that everything in nature gives out some aroma, some agreeable some less so, according to how it harmonizes with our own nature. If your sense of sight were keener, you would see this aroma surrounding each leaf or plant like a kind of halo; you would know that this is called the aura of the plant, which itself may be of varied colors. It belongs to a different, higher grade of matter called the astral; it is the very life essence of the plant, that which makes it grow into these wonderful shapes and brilliant colors. He whose thoughts are pure and strong enough to control this auric essence, he can wield it into whatever forms he pleases, just as a blacksmith forges his iron into different shapes. If you had a microscope sufficiently powerful to pierce through these shapes, you would find that the tiniest atoms of these leaves, seemingly lifeless and unmoveable, are in reality full of life and activity, whirling round and round a center, just like the planets round the sun, and they only wait the word of command from their superiors to move in a different direction, to alter their shape. This active

life of whirling round pertains to the whole of nature, as well to apparently lifeless stones as to sentient plants and animals, although the motion in the former is slower, and it may take thousands of years for them to bring about the same changes which in the latter are effected in a day. And, the most wonderful thought of all, all this movement is brought about by the power of sound, not ordinary sound such as the whistling of the wind, but a much finer sound which our ears cannot hear, and the meaning of which our inner senses can but vaguely comprehend. It is this sound which makes everything in nature vibrate in its innermost essence, its ether. Just as if you draw a violin bow alongside of a metallic plate covered with sand, this sand will form itself into various crystalline shapes; so do the rulers and angels of nature draw their bows, their thoughts into matter, and combine these little atoms into manifold shapes. Each of us can to a small extent help in this great moulding of matter, because, if our thoughts are good and harmonious, they have the power to attract those above us to our surroundings, and so assist in making them beautiful. Now we also can understand why this beauty of nature affects us in such a peculiar way. It is because the vibrations and music of nature throb in sympathy with our own hearts, and the more musical and loveable we make ourselves, the more we shall be in harmony with nature, and—the more beautiful will nature itself become. The whole world is striving towards harmony, and why should we not offer our mite?

Following a rugged path on the side of a hill, we reach a rock hanging over a foaming torrent winding its way through a narrow valley. There we stop for breath, also to gaze at a wonderful sight in front of us. There stands a giant mountain covered with snow, shining in the sunlight, seeming like a revelation from a higher world. It begins to dawn on us that this mountain points to a world different to the one which we felt surrounding us in the woods and meadows. *There* was ceaseless activity and harmony of sounds, *here* silence and peace reign, a silence, because to us it is unfathomable, a peace which no man can comprehend. If the woods made us feel an unspeakable delight, the sight of this mountain inspires us with a feeling so high that we dare not name it; it lifts us high above ourselves into unknown space. And as we stand there in rapt meditation, a silent prayer breathes through us:

“May I be strong and firm like that mountain, and may an aureole of peace and purity surround me and all human beings as the snow covers that mountain.”

It is getting late, the sun has disappeared behind the rocks and casts its reflection on the white snow, tinting it into a rose-colored hue, first brilliant, then growing fainter and fainter. It seems to us as a response to our prayer; we draw a deep breath, just as nature is wont to do when it has drawn

itself away from the rays of the sun. Down we scramble again and wend our way homewards, pensive, but cheerful in our hearts and deeply grateful for what we have learned. At home we try to tell our friends of what we have seen, those of our brothers and sisters who, less fortunate than ourselves, had to remain at home, but we feel that such sensations must be experienced by oneself; they can be but dimly described.

Mt. Shasta Springs, Calif.

AXEL WACHTMEISTER.

NATURE'S PARABLES.

Peace.

The waves were breaking high on the lake shore and fine spray dashed many feet above the embankment. Out on the lake "white caps" were chasing each other, and overhead the gulls were flying distractedly about. Everything was grey and dull, not unlike the state of my mind as I had walked forth.

My attention was first arrested by the commotion and turbulence of the water, and I was soon aware that an inner calm such as I had not known for days was possessing me. "What was the presence? what had evolved it? where did it abide? Does Turbulence hold a vision of Peace?" were some of the questions I asked myself, as is my habit when hearing the voice or feeling the touch of the Divine in nature—to search for it. My questions were soon answered.

The spray, rising so feathery but so fiercely over the rocks, revealed a maiden!

How exquisite she was! Every lineament of the sweet body was perfect; the eyes were large and blue; the hair, soft sprays of gold falling in wavy ringlets; and there she was, serene and smiling in the midst of the upspringing water.

"Have you always lived here, sweet maiden?" I was bold enough to ask.

"It is my home," was her simple answer.

"But are you not disturbed by the dash of the waves and the falling of the spray?"

For answer, the water leaped higher and higher than ever, and in the midst of it she rested as radiant and beautiful as before.

Her loveliness was of a kind to be felt, bringing serenity into the heart as one gazed upon it. Every sense was captivated. I no longer saw any turbulence of the water nor any dash of the

breakers. The calm mystery that reposed in the strength of the waves revealed itself above the uproar, as the vision of the maiden whose constraining spell seemed to go out over all the earth, saying: "In the midst of turmoil is Peace." I caught her image in the whitecaps that were chasing each other into the shore. She danced before me among the trees and flowers of the park. I saw her restful touch in the faces of young children, and I looked into her eyes as I gazed into the faces of the aged. All ranks of life revealed her, though often I moved among human throngs without catching a glimpse of her.

Strange as it may seem, I found her quite as frequently in the homes of poverty as in the homes of wealth, and I became convinced that whenever the depths of human feeling and passion are stirred, there in the midst is the maiden whose smile fills the world and whose beauty satisfies all hearts.

"My Peace give I unto you," speaks out of every disturbed condition, reveals itself in every form of darkness or despair that can come to the heart. It is echoing about us in every night of affliction that comes to the soul, and blesses us in the midst of our supposed sorrows. To behold the vision of this Peace is to become strong in the journey of life.

"Life itself has speech and is never silent, and its utterance is not, as you that are deaf, may suppose, a cry; it is a song. Listen to the song of life."

LYDIA BELL.

The (real) treasure is that laid up . . . through charity, piety, temperance and self-control . . . The treasure thus hid is secure, and passeth not away. Though he leave the fleeting riches of the world, this a man carries with him—a treasure that no wrong of others and no thief can steal.

—*Nidhikanda-sutta*.

Oftimes while he mused—as motionless
 As the fixed rock his seat, the squirrel leaped
 Upon his knee, the timid quail led forth
 Her brood between his feet, and blue doves pecked
 The rice-grains from the bowl beside his hand.

—*Sir Edwin Arnold, (Light of Asia bk. 5.)*